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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MILAN 000002

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [SMIG](#) [KISL](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: DIVERGENT PATHS OF INTEGRATION IN NORTHERN ITALY

REF: 09 MILAN 237

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Ben Wohlauser for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The integration of the growing immigrant population in Northern Italy is a challenge for communities throughout the region. Constructively, the city of Turin is taking advantage of a national government program to welcome so-called "second-generation immigrants" into the civil service. There is even an effort to make national Turin's program; though the likelihood of success in this campaign is far from certain. Conversely, Alzano Lombardo has (also in the name of integration) barred the town's large immigrant population from participating in an urban revitalization program. Fortunately, despite the regular anti-immigrant rhetoric (and occasional action) in Northern Italy, we believe Turin's example is more indicative of how local authorities are approaching the integration question. End Summary

Turin Sets a Good Example

¶2. (SBU) While some northern cities are known for their efforts at promoting integration of their immigrant populations, others are recognized more for their efforts to discourage it. On the positive side, in the city of Turin so-called "second-generation immigrants" (2Gs) are enjoying opportunities for civil service internship positions previously reserved for Italian nationals. The city has opened the door for 24 Italian-born (but non-citizen) sons and daughters of immigrants of eleven nationalities to participate in a program that encourages young people to work for the GOI. (According to Italian law, children born in Italy to non-Italian parents can only apply for citizenship after living uninterruptedly, and legally, in the country for 18 years.) Though funded nationally, the program is administered locally and Turin has chosen to make it part of the city's integration efforts. At the recent National Conference on Second-Generation Muslims held in Turin (reftel), Deputy Mayor for Integration Ilida Curti touted the benefits of the program's expansion: "Turin is recognizing that we live in a pluralistic society," and this program is one means of acknowledging that, "the integration process must be governed and supported."

¶3. (C) Now, thanks to a bill in Parliament proposed by Livia Turco, former Minister of Health in the Prodi government and current president of the forum on immigration and social politics in the Democratic Party (PD), this opportunity could be extended to second-generation young people around the country. The proposal calls for an expansion of the program to include participation by 2Gs between the ages of 18 and 25 years who have solid command of Italian and their "permesso di soggiorno" (residence permit). In addition to a small monthly salary for the duration of the 12-month program, the proposed bill would also afford 2G participants the right to renew their residency permits and favorable consideration for their citizenship applications. With applications

outnumbering positions annually since the initiative began in 2001, and the number of funded positions decreasing every year, Turco acknowledges the need for greater government financial investment. However, the important opportunity this program brings for the integration of "second-generation immigrants," Turco argues is well worth the cost of expansion. As noted in reftel, many observers believe that the failure to integrate these young people (particularly young people of Muslim origin) into mainstream Italian society could lead to some of them turning to more extremist (but welcoming) sub-cultures.

While Alzano Lombardo Takes Different Approach

¶4. (SBU) Just a few hours east (but much farther right politically) of Turin near Bergamo lies the town of Alzano Lombardo (population 13,000). Rather than embrace an integration program like Turin's, Mayor Roberto Anelli, a member of the Northern League political party, is promoting a different approach. In an effort to encourage investment in the town's decaying center, where much of the large immigrant community resides, the town is building a parking area that will be free to those that purchase a home in the zone. But there are a few conditions. Beneficiaries must be Italian citizens, married or about to be married, under the age of 65, and have been residents of the town for three years or more. Discriminatory? "Yes," says Anelli, "but it discriminates against many people, not just against immigrants." Alzano Lombardo's Italian population is declining but its immigrant community has grown to 14 percent overall. According to the city's Deputy Mayor for Urban Planning, Camillo Bertocchi, the integration/gentrification

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plan makes good democratic sense and is not exploitative. "We believe that integration does not happen in solely a cultural way but is also territorial," Bertocchi stated. "They should not go (to live) in created ghettos." He concludes by stating that repopulating of the center (and elimination of the "ghetto") will help strengthen society and benefit integration.

Comment: What's in a Word?

¶5. (C) While both cities purport to be supporting integration, their definitions of the term are clearly different. Turin's welcoming of "second-generation immigrants" into the government service program exemplifies the recognition that efforts must be made to include the immigrant community in civil society. While political roadblocks may delay or scotch Turco's bill, its proposal validates Turin's approach (at least in certain political circles). Meanwhile, the city leaders of Alzano Lombardo recognize the need for urban renewal and stability. However, they have chosen a path of exclusion rather than inclusion in the name of integration. Fortunately this seems to be the path less traveled -- at least in larger cities, which tend to adopt a more balanced approach to integration. However, in smaller towns in the Northern League heartland of Veneto and parts of Lombardia, rhetoric (and actions) increasingly reflect the positions of the more extreme anti-immigrant wing of the party.

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